



## **News Release**

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### **UDOH Helps Apartments and Condos Go Smoke Free With New On-line Guide**

**(Salt Lake City, UT)** – Apartment and condominium residents, managers, and owners can now breathe easier. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is launching the Utah Smoke-Free Apartment and Condominium Guide, an on-line resource designed to promote smoke-free housing in Utah.

Nationally, 50,000 people die each year as a result of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of people exposed to it suffer various other illnesses, such as asthma and bronchitis. While many Utahns appear to be taking steps to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, recent UDOH data indicate more than 25,000 children still live in homes where they are exposed.

Says Cassandra Fairclough, Health Program Specialist, UDOH, “Smoke-free policies not only protect tenants’ health, but they are also a sound business practice. Adopting smoke-free policies is simple and inexpensive. These policies can reduce the hazard of fire, cleaning and maintenance costs, and time spent addressing tenant complaints about smoke drifting from unit to unit. Insurance costs may also go down for those housing units that are smoke-free.”

Implementing smoke-free policies can also help reduce the likelihood of lawsuits by tenants suffering from the effects of SHS exposure. Under Utah law, the drift of SHS from one unit into another may be determined to be a nuisance.

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"Smoke-free rental units are a huge advantage to our clients, the property owners," says Debra Spohn, President/Principal Broker, Concept Property Management "A unit that has been occupied by a resident who smokes costs considerably more to get rent-ready after that resident moves out. For example, usually two coats of paint are required instead of one. And, there are cigarette burns in the carpet, counters, and sinks which have to be repaired or replaced. These repairs are eventually passed on to the consumer, the apartment renter."

The Utah Smoke-Free Apartment and Condominium Guide includes useful tools for managers and owners to help create smoke-free environments. The advantages of smoke-free units/buildings; how to eliminate drifting smoke; and types of smoke-free policies are just a few of the resources available to managers. The Web site also provides tenants with information about the health effects of SHS, ways to reduce exposure to SHS, tips on what one should know before renting, and how to resolve problems. The guide also contains a statewide directory of properties that provide smoke-free environments within units, on the premises, or both.

"Tenants have the right to live in a space free of dangerous secondhand smoke chemicals," added Fairclough. "As the research continues to prove these dangers, many persons, whether they smoke or not, are looking for ways to help prevent exposing their loved ones to secondhand smoke."

The Guide and statewide directory can be found at:

<http://www.tobaccofreeutah.org/aptcondoguide.html>. For additional questions, call the UDOH's Environmental Epidemiology Program (EEP) at 801-538-6191.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.*